



The European Electronic Toll Service

ONE VEHICLE, ONE CONTRACT, ONE ON-BOARD UNIT

The European Electronic Toll Service (EETS) will enable road users to easily pay tolls throughout the whole European Union (EU) thanks to one subscription contract with one service provider and one single on-board unit. The EETS will be available on all infrastructure with electronic tolls such as motorways, tunnels, bridges, ferries, etc. It will ensure the interoperability of electronic road toll systems on the entire Community road network, limit cash transactions at toll stations and eliminate cumbersome procedures for occasional users. This will improve traffic flow and reduce congestion.

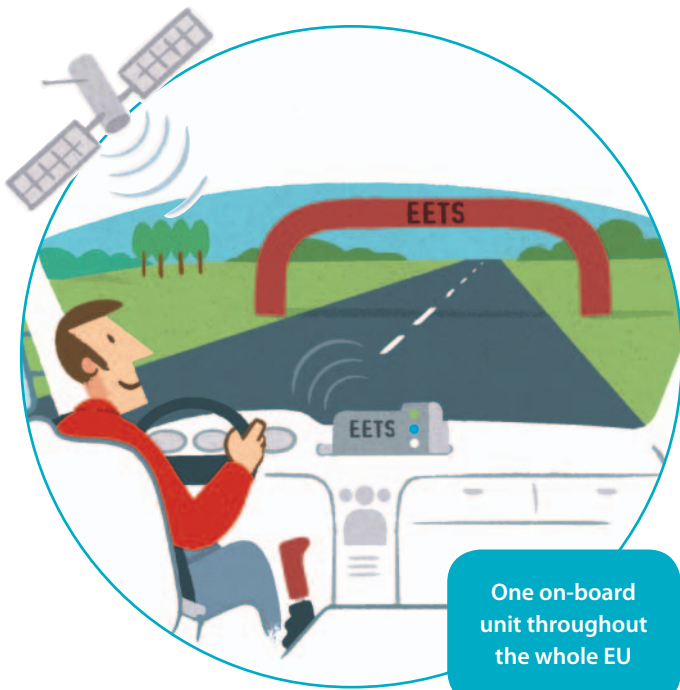
Why the EETS?

A toll is a charge paid by vehicle users to circulate on certain roads or areas. Tolls are generally employed to finance the construction and maintenance of road infrastructure and to tackle rising levels of congestion, noise and pollution. Electronic toll systems were introduced in several European countries in the early 1990s. These systems often operate with on-board equipment to collect and process data. However, various incompatible systems were set up at national or even local levels. National electronic systems are not often interoperable.

Non-interoperable road toll systems hinder especially international road transport. Road users must be equipped with on-board units specific to each Member State or tolled domain. So, to travel, for example, from Portugal to the Netherlands five units might be needed. Consequently, transporters need contracts with several road operators, each with their own invoicing and billing procedure. This means time-consuming paperwork and red tape for transporting goods across the EU. Moreover, occasional users have to deal with unfamiliar systems different for each country or domain with the ensuing negative impact on a smooth traffic flow.

Policy context

The European Parliament and the Council of the European Union adopted a directive on the interoperability of electronic road toll systems in 2004. It lays down the general conditions for the EETS ensuring the interoperability of toll systems used on the entire Community road network. It tasks the European Commission, assisted by a committee of Member State representatives (the Toll Committee), to further define the EETS and its technical elements. Following the approval of the Toll Committee and consultation of the European Parliament and the Council, the Commission adopted the decision on EETS definition in October 2009.



One on-board unit throughout the whole EU

The EETS in practice

Under this new system the three main partners are the users, EETS providers and toll chargers.

The EETS provider concludes contracts with users and grants them access to the EETS in the entire EU. The toll charger levies tolls for the circulation of vehicles in an EETS domain — i.e. a part of the EU road network or a structure such as a tunnel, bridge or a ferry liable to toll. Tolling policies remain to be decided by the Member States in compliance with EU legislation.

The EETS ensures interoperability between all the electronic road toll systems in the Community, which can use either: dedicated short-range communication (DSRC) and satellite positioning associated with mobile communications.

What it means for road users

Users may subscribe to the EETS provider of their choice. The latter will generally provide or, depending on its contracting policy, accept existing on-board equipment fulfilling the relevant technical requirements.

A single contract with a single EETS provider will alleviate users' administrative burden and simplify the movement of goods and people across the EU as they will be charged directly by their provider for the toll incurred by their vehicles while circulating in the entire EU. It is important to mention that tolls paid via the EETS shall not exceed the corresponding national or local toll.

The EETS is a continuous service: no in-vehicle human intervention is required if the vehicle's toll classification parameters do not change. For that reason, users must ensure that variable tolling parameters are correct at all times (e.g. the presence of a trailer or caravan, or the number of axles may need to be updated during a journey).

Drivers will not be distracted by multiple boxes (sometimes requiring a specific action on their part for each unit) on their dashboard and they will not have to know the specificities of each and every electronic road toll system they are going to encounter.

Drivers will no longer have to queue at toll booths, thereby avoiding traditional toll-related traffic disruptions. As a result, they will experience, to the benefit of the environment, more fluid and safer traffic and ultimately quicker journeys.

Eventually the EETS should allow the generalisation of free-flow (barrier-free) tolling, also across borders, as soon as it is fully put into place.

Each technology works differently:

DSRC

The on-board equipment communicates with a unit in the gantry, providing the identity of the responsible EETS provider and information such as date, time, vehicle type, etc. necessary to determine the toll



The toll charger invoices each EETS provider for the tolls incurred by the vehicles equipped with an on-board unit of this provider



The EETS provider pays the toll charger and invoices its users according to the user's contract

Satellite positioning

The on-board equipment determines when it is entering and/or circulating a toll domain and sends the toll relevant information (e.g. date, time) to the EETS provider in a secured way



The EETS provider communicates in a secured way the relevant information to the toll charger according to their contractual terms



In addition to tolling, the EETS on-board equipment should be able in the future to host other location-based services, like satellite navigation systems, emergency calls with accurate caller location, route information, traffic monitoring, guidance and routing, etc.

Member States shall ensure that the processing of personal data is carried out in accordance with the relevant Community rules protecting the freedoms and fundamental rights of individuals.

What it means for EETS providers

EETS providers act as an intermediary between users and toll chargers for the payment of tolls. Furthermore they can also provide additional location-based services making use of the EETS on-board equipment.

EETS providers must register in a Member State where they are established, conditional to certain technical, financial and management quality criteria. They are entitled to approach any toll charger to obtain access to the EETS domains under this toll charger's responsibility. Each provider has to cover all the EETS domains in the EU within a period of two years.

EETS providers must always keep their customers informed whether their EETS subscription is valid prior to entering an EETS domain. They have the obligation to inform their users of the processing of their travel information and the personal data measures implemented.

Member States and the European Commission will monitor whether an EETS provider fulfils its obligations and take appropriate actions in case of infringement.

What it means for toll chargers

Toll chargers have no direct contact with EETS users, except for enforcement where necessary. They therefore no longer have to perform detailed user management and can thus concentrate on their core business: road and traffic management.

Toll chargers must publish an 'EETS domain statement' outlining the general conditions for EETS providers to access their toll domains. An EETS provider meeting these requirements should obtain access on a non-discriminatory basis and their on-board equipment fulfilling the technical requirements shall be accepted by the toll charger with whom they conclude a contract.

Toll chargers have to publish as well the list of all the EETS providers operating on their domains and are responsible for the application of the tolling policies.





Interoperability management

Disputes may appear between toll chargers and EETS providers in their working relationships. Therefore, Member States with EETS domains shall put in place national 'conciliation bodies' which should be consulted by toll chargers and EETS providers in search of a dispute settlement.

The conciliation bodies shall especially be empowered to examine whether the conditions set by a toll charger on different EETS providers are non-discriminatory.

Technical compliance and interoperability of EETS providers' and toll chargers' infrastructure, equipment and processes shall be impartially assessed by competent laboratories and certification or inspection bodies.

What next?

The Commission decision on EETS definition entered into force on 8 October 2009 and was published in the *Official Journal of the European Union* on 13 October 2009. Subsequently, the EETS is to be available within three years for vehicles above 3.5 tonnes and/or allowed to carry more than nine passengers (including the driver) — and within five years for all types of vehicle.

The Commission intends to carry out a mid-term review 18 months after the entry into force of the decision.

Further information

Directorate-General for Transport and Energy — Road
http://ec.europa.eu/transport/road/index_en.htm

Full text of the Commission decision
<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2009:268:0011:0029:EN:PDF>